

PLOTINIAN DESTINY XXVI -- FINALITY

Marc Edmund Jones

This lesson is a consideration of Detached Considerations through sections one to three of the tractate, and the ultimate perspective on life is here an appreciation of the ultimate nature of real life streaming or immortal self-expression. Finality is the ultimate immediateness of reality and it is evident throughout life when under stress human nature is brought to reveal the genuine depths of itself. Suicide is a gesture of finality, as is the common gambling spirit, and even the most petty soul will seek to command an acknowledgment of finality from life by the precipitation of this and that issue. Oaths as representative of an immediate partnership of man and divinity are an effort to create finality in the issues of life. Destiny in the summary of its consideration becomes a distribution of finality or a fullness of present realization of the ultimate. This comes down practically to the necessity upon consciousness that the whole of life be ensouled by the underlying perspective or direction. Plotinus teaches that God must permeate his universe completely and totally, and man no less must enter into the ultimate extent of his domain of realization with the totality or divinity or finality of himself. Finality is not a yielding to any alien absoluteness, as in the case of the soul self-doomed to annihilation, but a drawing together of all factors of the being in a conscious wholeness. Realization is a capacity of soul and the eventual unification of all realization in the individual approach to eternity is finality as ultimate realization or a complete unification of selfhood in the unity of the all. This finality is a subjection of the complication of existence or the variety of awareness or experience to the greater simplicity of eternal idea. It is final because it is simplicity per se or completeness without the slightest deviation or differentiation in the aggregate. In practical life this finality must actuate an intelligent livingness. There must be a complete ensoulment of all lower by all higher reality. Values must be found in the lower rather than in the higher because the outstreaming of individuality has a complete mergence with the higher and only through its manifestation in the lower does it gain knowing or finality of realization. Values are the certification of the simpler or higher oneness. The higher finds place in all matter, and the seeker for higher truth must find his place in any and all possible situation. His must be the finality of character or a life streaming to bring ensoulment to every possible experience.

The wholeness of individual being is the finality of universal reality for the reason that cosmic unity which is lost as such in the bare fact of Eternity is the consummation of individual

streaming back to center. In other words as man is individual in a true livingness he is increasingly final in the reality of selfhood and so increasingly a factor in any ultimate structure of unity. The individual achieving vision has vision to share, and such sharing is the finality of idea. What is seen in God must be created in the lower world, Plotinus indicates, since idea touched with divinity is necessarily creative. Sharing of vision as an establishment of finality is a lending of immediate stability to genuine living.

The universal integrity of character in finality is creativeness as shared in a definite outstreaming of livingness. Most seekers are afraid of sharing and they hurry on from any finality in the fear that the pause might terminate the reality of inner awakening. But specialization as Plotinus points out does not destroy universality. The whole pouring of selfhood into some potential of the moment is only a strengthening of the finality in the life as a whole. Genius is defined familiarly as a capacity for infinite pains and self-streaming quickens the genius of the eternal self. Putting wholeness into each part of life is contributing wholeness to the absolute totality of all living.

The social implication of finality is found in the tendency of the race to cling to its great moments or group experiences of finality. Plotinus shows that authentic existence or absolute livingness is met on a path upward or toward the ideal, the ultimate stamping of idea into the group consciousness. Reality is ever a move to totality or the upward or complete realization, and individuality desiring to be constructive or enduring must cooperate in the social effort to wholeness. In Plotinian imagery the way to be helped upward is to help downward by lending ensoulment or contributing idea to elements of lesser self-unfoldment. The seeker becomes a channel for an outstreaming livingness greater than his own. Acting for the group he begins to gain a group dimension of being, and others increasingly are able to touch unity or achieve finality through the ideal experience shared with him. Wholeness is finality of self-expansion with the being fulfilled in the realization of all men. The operation of destiny as social justice is the finality of sharing in the ensoulment of the group through the livingness of the individual channels of the process. Unity in its fullness is multiplicity by the typical Plotinian paradox, or a perfection of togetherness and not apartness. Finality is the ultimate-together. There is nothing more to share, as it were, or no further realization to be gained as far as the aggregation is concerned. What is final is consummated, and consummation is a social and not a differentiate phenomenon. The destiny of man ends in the finality of ultimate unfoldment or a recurrent experience whenever the self expands to a new realm of realization and there gains its freshened self-knowing.

The individual opportunity in destiny lies in the immediate consummation of selfhood at every true moment of soul unfoldment. Destiny individually is the potential finality, and it is not a spatial and temporal abrogation of livingness but a cancellation of the infinite regress of inadequacy. Destiny is not what is to be or the evaluation of what has been, as may well be repeated here, but is the regrasping of livingness in a new steadiness of outstreaming from source in a new perspective of ultimate idea-appreciation. What is destined is whole and complete, and the center of this wholeness and completeness is necessarily the selfhood or the soul. What is actual or destined is that which remains self-identical for its total moment in definite intimation of eternity. The individual contribution to destiny in terms of finality is the expanded awareness of self-stability in these moments of existence. The man capable of knowing himself in unwavering conformity to idea or potentiality, or the one never surrendering to transient advantage at the sacrifice of a major course of aspiration and never losing consciousness in that of another to whom he yields envious superiority, is living a destiny that lends finality to social reality. Self-consciousness as a sensitiveness due to insufficient actuation by idea is a derivative reality leading to bondage, but true self-consciousness is a finality in self-knowing subject to expansion but never to any regression in source-reality. Finality is an outstreaming of self to its conscious cosmic unity.

SUGGESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- (1) In what way is finality manifested throughout life? Why do men seek to create finality at various points in life? How do they do this? How must man enter into his dominion? Under what circumstances is a soul self-doomed to annihilation? What does this mean?
- (2) What is finality of realization? How is it gained? How does the individual become increasingly final? Why is this good? Why must each finality be shared?
- (3) What relationship exists between specialization and universality? Why is it each seeker's job to help downward? How does he do this?
- (4) Explain why unity in its fullness is multiplicity. Why is finality essentially a group process? How does it work?
- (5) How will you recognize the true moments of self-unfoldment? What must you do at such moments? With what results? How may an individual become self-conscious? When is this good?

A Series of Lessons in O M A R ' S Q U A T R A I N S

Based on

Edward FitzGerald's translation, "*Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*"

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OMAR'S QUATRAINS I -- AWAKENING

Marc Edmund Jones

Awake! for morning in the Bowl of Night
 Has flung the Stone that puts the Stars to Flight: And
 Lo! the Hunter of the East has caught
 The Sultan's Turret in a Noose of Light.

Dreaming when Dawn's Left Hand was in the Sky
 I heard a Voice within the Tavern cry,
 'Awake, my Little ones, and fill the Cup Before
 Life's Liquor in its Cup be dry.'

This lesson, inaugurating the second half of a ninety-fourth year in the presentation of the Philosophy of Concepts (Class 63, Lessons 1575-1600) and beginning a series of twenty-six studies in the Rubaiyat (quatrains or verses in four line stanzas) of Omar Khayyam (i.e., Omar the Tentmaker), is a consideration of stanzas I and II or of man's instinctive outreaching to the absolute as here captured in the poetry and is an intuition of reality as that into which man is able to move in consciousness as in the awakening which becomes the theme of the present lesson. Omar was born at Naishapur in Khorasan, and lived through the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries. He was one of three intimates to study together under Persia's most famous teacher of the time. Another of these became vizier of the son and grandson of that Tartar whose dynasty stirred Europe to the Crusades, the third became real founder of the terrible sect of Assassins and was known to the Crusaders as the Old Man of the Mountain. The Vizier was Omar's patron, and made possible his devotion to science. It is in this realm that he ranks as one of the greatest of any age. Whether Omar like Paul ever practiced the occupation of tentmaker is a matter of conjecture since Khayyam is his poetical name or Takhallus. Edward FitzGerald, perhaps the world's most modest author, began his gentle literary career in the mid-Nineteenth century among the Cambridge circle including Tennyson, Thackeray and others. His first edition of the Rubaiyat was anonymous and published at his own expense because of editorial rejection. It so far failed to sell that the edition found its way to the penny stand of the publisher and bookseller. Here at the sidewalk Dante Gabrielle Rossetti found it and began the acclaim that has never ceased until indeed the cult of Omar, beginning with the English translation, has come to cover the globe. FitzGerald issued many editions and added to the quatrains translated. Contrary to usual results he was able to improve his version with every polishing. The first edition (1859) is used for these lessons, as closer to the

original inspiration of the author's mind and to the awakening of his genius as example in his life of man's all important absolute outreaching.

The transcendent in human character by which the outreach of absolute instinct is made manifest is laid before the reader in the present stanzas by the worldliness which is the theme of the whole poem. This is a delicate and a biting skepticism, the delicacy its music and the bite its appeal deep to the inner heart of experience. FitzGerald and Omar both were independent of life. The former in his retiring nature and bizarre interests gained an escape to the intuitive reality which for the latter was provided by his sustaining devotion to pure or abstract science. The men were twins in this worldliness, not belittling everyday living but scorning all blindness to the larger patterns of existence.

The message of aesthetic appreciation or man's effort to record whatever realization he may have of his absolute outreach is found through these opening stanzas in the picture of the false and true dawn and in the contrast between the inner voice of intuition and the outer articulation of nature and the world. The *Subhi kazib*, or transient light on the horizon about an hour before the *Subhi sedik* or true dawn, is a well-known phenomenon in the East. This, the left hand of dawn, sustains the illusion of the inner voice and its call to the convivial cup. But the definite awakening of man is in the objective world to the sunlight, the disappearance of the stars and the gleaming of the skyscraper of authority. Man must ever be anthropomorphic, possessing images and external tangibility of rite and ritual for sustainment of his devotion to abstract principle or deity. And then it seems to be mankind's fate to descend to a worship of the image and a veneration for the rite. Culture becomes syncopated as cult, prescience degenerates to prejudice and it is necessary to sing a new song of the absolute. The worldliness of a genuine sophistication as marked in Omar and his translator is revolt against the limitations of inspiration in a conventional and unimaginative pattern. It is an insinuating transcendence by which the greater vision is brought again to man. This is art in its highest function. This is the privilege of genuine poetry. The sun is the hunter of the East in the sharp poignancy of this first translation, not as an image but as an imaginative suggestion. The stars have flown. False dawn yields. Man flowers, though all fades.

The transcendent in human art by which poetry, music and the plastic achievements of the artist become a record of the absolute experience of the race as a whole is caught by the reader in the brilliant imagery of the oriental scene. This alone serves to soften the hollow scoffing by which the poet's genuine aspiration is concealed to be expressed transcendently. It is impossible to follow Nicolas in taking the stanzas as symbolical, or as foreshadowing spiritual powers

under the figures of wine and the like, indeed making Omar one of the Sufis whose practice he ridiculed. Omar gave voice to life, its intuition and aspiration, and its revolt against the fixed and set whether orthodox and stagnant or esoteric and fantastic. The vivid reality of the quatrains is due to their fellowship with every day and their articulation of the soul's inner reality.

The suggestion of personal transcendence in the two opening stanzas lies in the vision of personality's awakening as the greatest art of life. The idea has pervaded all transcendental philosophy from that of the Sufis known to Omar down to modern America where the Platonic doctrine of recollection has appeared as occult initiation and where orthodoxy gives its greatest consolation in the common defeatist acceptance of this world by the promise of an awakening in heaven at death. In all life the being stirs to its own potentiality, and in the way that the cup literally will for the moment re-create an individual so an invisible cup or absolute communion reendows every soul. The message of personal realization or the intimation of actuality in this awakening is presented to the reader through the intuition of fullness in the transcendent experience. As inevitably as the coming of the sun, and the flight of night, the inner or eternal voice calls to man. He may not hear. He may cling to his limitations, but again and again comes the summons. "Awake...!"

SUGGESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- (1) What is meant by the awakening? What causes it? Awake to what?
- (2) What was Omar's background? What influences brought out his genius? In what respect were Omar and FitzGerald akin? Why would Omar be called a skeptic?
- (3) How can worldliness be a manifestation of the transcendent in human character? Why should worldliness be the theme of this entire series?
- (4) What is the distinction between the true and the false dawn? What must be man's relation to the world of every day as he seeks the transcendent?
- (5) What is the test of real art and how may it be applied to the Rubaiyat? Why is Omar's voice so vivid? Why are symbols needed?

OMAR'S QUATRAINS II -- OPPORTUNITY

Marc Edmund Jones

And as the cock crew, those who stood before
The Tavern shouted--'Open then the Door!
You know how little while we have to stay,
And, once departed, may return no more.'

And the New Year reviving old Desires,
The thoughtful Soul to Solitude retires,
Where the WHITE HAND of Moses on the Bough
Puts out, and Jesus from the Ground suspires.

Iram indeed is gone with all its Rose,
And Jamshyd's Sev'n-ring'd Cup where no one knows;
But still the Vine her ancient Ruby yields,
And still a Garden by the Water blows.

This lesson is a consideration of Stanzas III to V, wherein man's instinctive outreaching to the absolute is the attribution of healing power to human personality in its fullness or is the idea that immortality, transcendence and all the higher values of life are as infectious in their way as vice, disease and the more familiar lower hazards of existence. The reference to the white hand of Moses is to the story in Exodus (4:6), the Persians affirming that there was not merely a thaumaturgic showing off in a sign as would be the case if the hand became leprous and then were cured but that the manifestation was of the translucence of matter visibly suffused with spirit and that Moses' hand was white like the May blossom and showed touch with the purifying presence of the eternal. The healing power of Jesus is seen in his breath, or his respiration with and through life even after his death and not in his immediately spectacular miracles in the narrow range of his Palestinian ministry where the atmosphere borders on the wonder-mongering of a medicine show. The gentle skepticism of Omar is not repudiating the fact of spiritual healing, but insisting on a transcendence acceptable to the reasonable mind. The absolute is touched in an absoluteness of doing and opportunity in living is by a heightening of life at every manifestation. Healing is the thaumaturgy in a sudden breaking through to the absolute, and those who would invite the transcendent experience or awaken to their higher must necessarily see the whiteness of the Mosaic hand, feel the Christly breath, retire to the solitude of the inner being and there in the old desires discover the foundational absoluteness or perpetuity of the self.

The transcendent in human character is here laid before the reader in the immediateness by which all genuine opportunity is identified. The worldliness of Omar is clever evaluation, not surrender to sensual pleasure. The impatience of the tavern patrons at early dawn is hardly the heavy self-bestialization of the drunkard, who indeed finds it as hard to stir to the new day as to depart from the old at the time of the tavern's closing the night before. Rather it is living eagerness to fill the span of experience with all possible richness. Transcendence reveals itself in the foreshortening of experience or the little while we have to stay. Kindness to a child cannot risk the growth that makes the man or woman. Understanding in life's issues cannot chance a deadening passage to another day. Insight into the eternal cannot survive acceptance of the conditioning realities in normal limitation. The cock crows or opportunity knocks, and the higher once departed may never return.

The message of aesthetic appreciation is found in the inevitability of any touch with the absolute. It is not that the divine begrudges its tenders of favor to man, or in hurt childishness never offering again what once is refused, but that if man once draws aside from the larger reality in his awakening to opportunity he thereby has an experience of frustration apt ever after to condition his response to the absolute and so to hold him in bondage. Somehow mankind must be given a sustainment in the absolute outreaching. In some manner a reality must be set up that will balance the weight downward of frustration, disillusion, inner and secret disappointment. Here is the function of religion, striving openly to keep men stirred to their immortal opportunity, and here also is the function of art and aesthetics straining more covertly to the same end. When man will not respond to the clarion call of faith, as is usually true of him, there is for him the rich symbolism of his culture. Friendship and romance serve him in the relations of personality, and if he cannot function on higher planes there is the conviviality which for the major part will stimulate him forward rather than otherwise. More unsuspected are the symbols of opportunity in life's veneration. These may be ephemeral--political, social and economic--or they may be the plastic representations of higher reality. The seven-ringed cup is the divining or fortune-telling goblet known to the Persians, and its reminder of seven planets, seven heavens, seven seas and the like is a constant emphasis of the superior orderliness or intelligence by which even skepticism may articulate a faith.

The transcendent in human art is this pattern of standard, for by it assurance becomes a living reality. There may be no God to the scoffer who sees the surface injustice of existence and not the reconciliation which as a higher would go unknown otherwise, and who is aware of consciousness in its distinction rather than the fellowship by which it is ordered or enabled to be, but the sunset will be

as vivid to him through art and objective idealism as otherwise. There is no golden age that Omar may know, but there is its representation if no more than in the faint perfume of memory. Iram, planted by King Shaddad, is under the sands--of Arabia, but the spirit of its roses remains as aesthetic testimony to the underlying reality.

The suggestion of personal transcendence lies in these constants of experience. Over against death and taxes as ultimate certainties are the assurances of nature in her larger order. Today passes and men are as the leaves of grass but with tomorrow there is the vine that may be pressed even as now and as far back as history has been written, the ruby fluid serving men as always. Is human personality less than this? Is opportunity a hollow echo of reality? Nay, there still will be a garden by the water, and therein men will have their grape and their cycles of the returning New Year. The soul of man forever stands at its vernal equinox. Old desires are testimony to the absoluteness of the consciousness that will once awaken to itself, and as there is wine forever ahead so is there eternally the opportunity of human expression. The message of personal realization is presented to the reader in the symbol of conviviality. This may be literal at a groping stage of existence, and for many a way of conviviality will be bestialization and eventual death of the soul. But in the fellowship of life's tavern, even on the least of levels, men are linked in their sharing, and men in a true spirit of sharing are immortal.

SUGGESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- (1) What method of healing does Omar recommend? How is it to be realized?
- (2) Why does Omar insist on a transcendence acceptable to the reasonable mind?
- (3) How does Omar's interpretation of worldliness differ from the popular conception? How is opportunity to be recognized? What is the danger of rejecting any opportunity?
- (4) Why is transcendence revealed in the foreshortening of experience? In what way do religion and art have the same function?
- (5) What is meant by the statement that the soul of man forever stands at its vernal equinox? What is life's tavern and what fellowship does it offer a man?

OMAR'S QUATRAINS III -- IMMORTALITY

Marc Edmund Jones

And David's Lips are lock't; but in divine
 High-piping Pahlevi, with 'Wine! Wine! Wine!
 Red Wine!'--the Nightingale cries to the Rose
 That yellow Cheek of her's to'incarnadine.

Come, fill the cup, and in the Fire of Spring
 The Winter Garment of Repentance fling:
 The Bird of Time has but a little way
 To fly--and Lo! the Bird is on the Wing.

And look--a thousand Blossoms with the Day
 Woke--and a thousand scatter's into Clay:
 And this first Summer Month that brings the Rose
 Shall take Jamshyd and Kaikobad away.

This lesson is a consideration of Stanzas VI to VIII, wherein man's instinctive outreaching to the absolute is the concept of a cosmic or perfect language. Nothing can be expressed except in a tongue of its own kind, and for the absolute a perfected articulation is utterly essential. Poetry gains transcendence of normal limitation by a shaping and polishing of the existing languages of man, but the voice of the poet must ever remain vague as if speaking in reality to the intuition alone. Above poetry and aesthetic symbolism of all sorts is to be presumed to be an absolute clarity and perfection in the interchange of ideas and ultimate reality, and such is prefigured by Omar in the Pehlevi (old Heroic Sanskrit of Persia) which Hafiz, greatest of all Persian poets, identifies as the tongue of the nightingale. Perfection speaks to perfection, the absolute to the absolute, and if man is to attain to a practical transcendence in the drab detail of ordinary existence it will be an outreaching or an outspeaking of his own soul in an immortal song. The theory behind the belief in Pehlevi or similar ancient spiritual languages is that the ordinary tongues of men will change with their descent from original perfection but that the absolute expression remains for those who will rise to master it. David's lips are locked by his passing from this world, and Kaikobad (greatest of the powerful Seljuk-Turk rulers) has been destroyed with all his glory. Human authority collapses, even if its genius is broad, for in the conquests of both David and Kaikobad were the seeds of the dissolution of their empires. Man must reach beyond the frail structures of his own erection.

The transcendent in human character is here laid before the reader in the contrast between the spirit that lives on after man and

the flesh with transient and hollow glory. Shallowness is the greatest blight of existence, and even in his skepticism Omar must see a greater than skeptical reality. There is saffron living, a red and blooded life. The nightingale, who speaks only an absolute language of utter aspiration, calls ever to the yellow rose to be red or to the jaundiced soul to be crimson in its self-sacrifice to eternality. White, yellow and red roses were all common in Persia, with a symbolism calling to the understanding of the poetic mind. Purity is the basis of all value, yet all purity must fade to saffron and all unfired values to decadent narrowness. Not only is spirit needed in living, but red spirit or a fight of absolute self-expenditure. The soul must flush to its opportunity, or blush for its failure to stir to the nightingale's call. Man's living must be far more than the exercise of that feeble momentum by which he gained his birth.

The message of aesthetic appreciation is found in the symbolism by which human nature best laughs at its own dissipation of the soul's absolute outreaching, or the mythology in which man's worst is apt to appear as the gods at their best. Jamshyd in Persian myths is chief of the Peri or angelic beings, and because he boasted of his immortality he was forced to incarnate in human form. In traditional history he ruled seven hundred years, three hundred of which were a golden age. The boast was idle because the immortality was self-conscious, or a distinction of personality by which the very idea of immortality is destroyed. His presumption of the absolute was his self-sentence to lesser state, even as the soul of today in presuming certain eternal immunities is condemning itself to a reality in realms where the presumption is entertained. Thus the ardent Christian who is so without understanding as to gain satisfaction in his spiritualized state, and willing to express this whether to himself or others among the luckless ones of his fellows who have not gained his own awakening, has certified his reality on the plane of those he belittles. His own state is depressed and his own destiny shortened. But the aspirant who gains a transcendent intuition, and expresses himself however haltingly in the Pehlevi of the soul's nightingale moods, is reaching out to touch all his fellows in a fellowship of their own perhaps unsuspected songs in the Pehlevi. The result is a new transcendence of the soul and a definiteness of immortality, or an upliftment that is shared and sustained with others and that in consequence escapes all the pure limitation of self.

The transcendence in human art is the invisible fellowship of man's nightingale moods. It is Pehlevi articulation. Perhaps the most curious feature of these stanzas is the taking together of actual or historical, fairy or mythological rulers, both among the greatest of their kind but neither meeting the other on any level of reality. Both succumb to time at the call of a single month. Neither has moved to make absolute any of the values he has possessed. Jamshyd had his seven-ringed cup for divining the future, but he could

not see through to his own self-elected destruction. Kaikobad defeated all his immediate enemies, but in so doing he destroyed the one among them who actually was his ally against the greater enemy beyond or the Mongols. Fellowship is the first intuition that must be expressed in any mastering of Pehlevi, and it is to the rose that the poet looks for his lesson since a thousand blooms are matured as a thousand return to their clay. The day is creator and destroyer, but the greater day is sustainer of the reality or the spirit. In essence all is immortal, and to the essence of life man must turn.

The suggestion of personal transcendence lies in gaining this greater day of existence or larger cycle of being. The garment of repentance must be thrown aside, for regrets are vain if man clings to his weaknesses and equally vain if he transcends them and from his essence of experience gains a phoenixlike strength. The fire of spring or the wine of spirit in the cup is the soul's Pehlevi voice to itself. It is immortality, but as a mode and manner of being. The message of personal realization is presented to the reader in the symbol of inexorability with time, forever passing on, sustaining only that which is the accident in its timelessness. The bird is on the wing when the soul functions, since spirit flies abreast with time. There is pressure of the moment in immortal realization, but pressure to flight and away from time limitation.

SUGGESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- (1) Why is a cosmic language necessary? Failing this, what does a man use? With what success or limitation? How will he hope to develop skill in cosmic language? What gives poetry transcendent value?
- (2) why does Omar have no tolerance of shallowness? If purity is the ultimate, why must it fade?
- (3) What is the message of the nightingale? How should the seeker respond to this? When does immortality become self-conscious and why does it fail then? When does it escape limitation?
- (4) Why is it that those of us who elect self-destruction are never aware of having done so? How can we avoid repetition of an unconscious act?
- (5) What is the symbol of inexorability and how is it presented to the seeker? Why are regrets always vain? What is Pehlevi and why must man master this? How will he do it?

LETTER TO THE NEOPHYTES AND REGULAR STUDENTS Number 454
Issued weekly for instruction in pertinent points of genuine occultism

THE AGONY OF COSMIC SERVICE

Dear Aspirant:

There is nothing of the common and cheap martyrdom in an actual agony of cosmic service but rather a truly satisfying happiness that is a sort of timeless independence of applause or superficial necessity for any kind of proper human co-operation. It is unfortunate that the forceful word agony has to be adopted in this connection, but any weaker terminology would lose the entire significance. Certainly in totality of self-giving the idea of agony is superior and the sweet happiness is in the utter wholeness of a self-spending that is usually known only in a romance of the most exciting sort. In the way that a follower of Jesus is asked to hunger and thirst after righteousness so must the seeker have an equivalent hungering and thirsting for the opportunity that will permit him to give of himself to humanity.

Cosmic service is thus in its roots a subjective reality and an invisible and immortal fact. Outwardly the service is to self in and through creating a transcendent consciousness in self. Things that are done objectively in the objective world will be of cosmic use and often of social value but all effort pointed to a definite goal is ulterior and of itself anticosmic. The seeker may very well make his genuine contribution to mankind but never by any direct effort to that end. If this were not so then vanity would enter and the wholly self would joy in personal self-contemplation. An agony of cosmic service more often than not comes from a sense of total unworthiness and of an utter lack of real accomplishment. The soul has not succeeded in any loss of itself in its immediate ends but in itself has gained power of ultimate self-realization that gives to every unsuspected radiation of itself a shared fellowship in the hope that is a real divine presence.

Yours in the fellowship of the spirit,

MARC EDMUND JONES

Stanwood, Washington 98292, January 9, 2017

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THE AFFIRMATIONS FOR LAST WEEK AND THIS

Health: I rely on the healing power of God within me.

Prosperity: I enter every experience with the whole of myself.

Happiness: My heart has found the shrine at every wayside.

LETTER TO THE NEOPHYTES AND REGULAR STUDENTS Number 455
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THE REAL DIVINE PRESENCE

Dear Aspirant:

The paradox is not adopted to make spiritual instruction more difficult but comes entirely from inadequacy of words. The term that may be taken for the expression of a transcendent reality will be unable to convey its proper meaning save in some sort of transcendence in its use, and the meaning is not taken from the word but rather from a rebound precipitated by the word. To say that God is love is never to make Him infinitely tolerant of human weakness but to suggest to an inadequacy of living the requisite fullness that will command a fellow attention from God. God is love in the sense of knowing only the inner and eternal life that speaks to love and calls it forth. When we identify God as justice we truly are accepting the necessity of living and dealing justly if we ever are to be known of God.

An awareness of the Divine presence is therefore not any sort of success in becoming the pipe or funnel for the flowing through us of God's nature in some way but rather a developing of our presence so as to match the eternal presence and direct the attention of men to God instead of to us. Often the seeker desires primarily to shine in the company of his fellows or to borrow some shreds of godly purple as a means for dazzling them. It is true that he will not express it in this way to himself but subconsciously he desires support for an inner feeling of possessed truth that somehow is not secure enough to assure itself by its own light within itself. Mock humility is not the real corrective for inner smugness because it is no less a pose than virile self-assertiveness. The eternal presence of the Divine is evident in terms of human experience in the awe of what should be. Man is given a light beyond and in its gleam he knows his lesser self as nothing.

Yours in the fellowship of the spirit,

MARC EDMUND JONES

Stanwood, Washington 98292, January 16, 2017

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THE AFFIRMATIONS FOR THIS WEEK AND NEXT

Health: I am the temple of the illimitable now.
Prosperity: I build a new sense of values every day.
Happiness: My joys are fresh-created from on high.

LETTER TO THE NEOPHYTES AND REGULAR STUDENTS Number 456
Issued weekly for instruction in pertinent points of genuine occultism

THE AWE OF WHAT SHOULD BE

Dear Aspirant:

Creativeness in its every aspect may be described as awe of what should be or as a divine presence first quickened in man. It may be stated that only through awe of the potential is God really expressed and His will made manifest. Creative genius always knows its newborn and soon proceeds to authenticate the mystic birth by its capture of a beauty of expression in the shape and suggestiveness revealed in the moment filled with reverence. No mother ever looked on her child with any greater degree of wonder at the miracle of it than will the artist regard his handiwork or God realize the intrinsic beauty of His creation and its flowering in His creatures. The divine presence becomes the mind in men through which they find themselves above self-seeking and at the same time wholly self-consummated. It is not that God has presented Himself to men since He can hardly subtract from His own nature but that men suddenly have flowered as God's creatures in a fullness of real or eternal divine fellowship. Man is himself. Man is capitalized!

The utter self-consummation is not arrival at a goal but an awakening to the fact that whatever is real in the self is beyond a conception in self as self is physically or outwardly self-known. It is the miracle of retraction to source in self to find instead of complete loss of outer self a complete expansion of the inner and a whole drawing of the outer into a greater inner as again a paradox in words. The awe of what should be flowers into an awe of what is coming to be, and the soul in a sudden sharing of eternal creation is lifted to that totality of infinite fellowship in which human presence stands divine. And what thus takes place inwardly is reflected in an outer wholeness. The objectively known life suddenly becomes a manifest totality.

Yours in the fellowship of the spirit,

MARC EDMUND JONES

Stanwood, Washington 98292, January 23, 2017

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THE AFFIRMATIONS FOR LAST WEEK AND THIS

Health: I am the temple of the illimitable now.
Prosperity: I build a new sense of values every day.
Happiness: My joys are fresh-created from on high..

LETTER TO THE NEOPHYTES AND REGULAR STUDENTS Number 457
Issued weekly for instruction in pertinent points of genuine occultism

THE MANIFEST TOTALITY

Dear Aspirant:

Nothing would be more inconsistent than for seekers of a higher truth to emphasize fullness in their world of everyday and with the same breath to affirm that there is no reality save in an ultimate subjective or spiritual state. Superficial students often do this in a way that shows they neither are aware of the inconsistency nor think through to the real significance of the double emphasis. There is no acceptable fact in the notion that those who inherit higher truths are a select company of special privilege and that the abundance in living demanded by them is the birthright with which they are endowed so that others may recognize them for what they are and so that they may enjoy life in a way befitting their high estate. Neither is there anything acceptable in the idea that abundance is God's will for all and that a delivery of the abundance by God is dependent on a proper lip service. The health, wealth and happiness gained by awakened men and women must be seen as an authentication of their spiritual fullness by the entire world as it pays this willing tribute to an inner fellowship spread by them in their breadth of living. But these forms of abundance cannot be seen as any contribution to a mere enjoyment of objective life.

The abundance of life is enjoyed after all in some ideal or ultimate significance. A person whose life is empty looks with an aching envy on this outer abundance but if he gained it while empty in his inner being it would destroy him. A person who is full within is beyond possibility of self-bestializing. His possession of the gifts and bounties of spirit is a sharing in significance and uplift and the outer thing is inconsequential save to those who cannot by more direct perception know the manifest totality when they see it.

Yours in the fellowship of the spirit,

MARC EDMUND JONES

Stanwood, Washington 98292, January 30, 2017

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THE AFFIRMATIONS FOR THIS WEEK AND NEXT

Health: My body is the treasure house of higher thoughts.
Prosperity: I bring new life to everything in which I participate.
Happiness: I welcome every phase of life within my soul.